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Title: Ch. 1: Iron Will

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While I may not be the  
epic hero whose name is  
known throughout the  
land, I am an able  
seaman, and like any  
sailor, in any tavern, I  
have my share of tales.  
My tale begins,  
appropriately enough, in a  
Tavern in Trinsic. I was a  
man of the sea, yet I  
was without a ship of my  
own, nor was there any  
Captain looking to hire an  
able seaman at the time.

So, I spent my time  
poring over old treasure  
maps, Thinking perhaps to  
explore a bit of the  
countryside and take a  
brief respite from the  
ardors of the sea. I had  
settled in at my usual  
table by the hearth at  
the Keg and Anchor, and  
ordered another mug from  
the Tavernkeeper, when a  
voice over my shoulder  
said, "This one is on me."

I turned and found  
myself looking up at a  
smiling man of middle  
years, one who I had  
known for some time as  
a competent and  
trustworthy swordsman.

"Lanavar!" said I, rising  
to greet him. "It's been a  
while. How are you, old  
friend?"

He shook his cloak out,  
laying it to dry by the  
fire. "I fare well enough,  
I suppose," he replied. "I  
am, in fact, about to  
embark on a new  
endeavor. In fact, you  
may be Interested."

He took a drink from his mug, then said, "I have left the Alliance."

"Left! but why?" We both were members of an enclave known as The New Alliance, a group of friendly and helpful people who strove hard to make newcomers feel welcome. I was, after a fashion, a newcomer to this land myself, having spent some years in Orcish captivity. Lanavar had left home long ago to fight in foreign wars, and was in many ways as new to his homeland as I was.

In answer to my question, he said, "Politics, I suppose. The Alliance is full of good people, but I feel a bit..." he paused, searching for the words, "...out of place, would be the best way to put it."

I myself was not dissatisfied with the Alliance, Though I did spend much of my time apart, pursuing my own ventures. "What will you do now?" I asked.

He leaned forward, and said quietly, "I am reviving the Iron Will."

Lanavar had told a few tales, over the many months I had known him, of the Warrior's Guild he had once belonged to, known as Iron Will. He had risen to some prominence within its ranks, but shortly after he left for other lands, the guild dissolved. He was oft nostalgic for the "old days of thunder and glory," as he liked to put it. Now, he spoke of returning to that glory, and was offering me a place.

"I am a warrior by nature," he said, "this you know. But I do not wish

to fight for the sake of battle alone; I want to change the world."

He told me briefly of his plans: To recruit and train a large fighting force, capable of Taming the wildest corners of this land, and fight to purge Felucca of the brigands and scoundrels who preyed on innocents, and to challenge great guilds on the field of battle for honor, glory, and wealth.

"I could use someone like you, Magellan," he continued. "Your naval experience could prove valuable, for I plan on dealing with the Pirates that plague the waterways, and provide protection for merchants, explorers, and miners along the coast."

"An interesting concept," I said, not yet committing myself. "I wouldn't mind Captaining a capable crew. It has been a while."

"I want you to be more than just Captain of a ship," he said. "I want you to command an entire fleet...Admiral."

Perhaps I am a bit vain, But being the Admiral, Building a naval force from scratch and developing it as I saw fit, had a certain appeal.

We spoke more on the matter long into the night, and I found his fervor for his new project to be rather appealing. Many a man speaks of glory and fame, and making a name for himself, but few thought out their plan to the extent that Lanavar had.

"Most of the structure of our Guild will be identical to the original Iron Will," he replied. "I

will be making some improvements over time, and even though it won't happen overnight, We can build something worthwhile here."

I finally agreed, seeing that his zeal was tempered by reason and patience. The next morning, we set out to introduce me to the others who had joined him, and I left that place an admiral awaiting a fleet.

Lan was experienced with group combat, and resolved to test his small band's abilities as a whole, so we agreed to travel to the Entrance to the dungeon of Doom, and make a brief sortie into its depths.

There were six of us present for this hunt: Myself, Lanavar, Talis Eraphen the Mystic, Racelin, Isabella, and the Lady Love.

Talis led us into the depths, and, Mystic or not, he was one of the most formidable warriors I have ever met. He seemed always to be everywhere at once, keeping our forces marshalled together, and when one of us would fall, he used his not insignificant talents to restore them to life. I followed in drogue, doing my best to heal others, and joining in the fray as much as possible. Lady Love dove into the fiercest battles, slaughtering Liches with abandon, and Lanavar was right on her heels, with Isabella and Racelin flanking out to the left and right. We created quite a row as we hammered through the

undead, putting many of  
them into a more  
permanent type of death.  
A large band of liches  
launched a counter attack,  
and I found myself  
cutting down three dead  
sailors who were risen to  
serve these Liches. I was  
struck from behind by  
powerful magics, and  
turned to cast a little  
death at that Lich. I  
faced not one, but three  
of the sinister creatures!  
I desperately cast out a  
spirit of blades, and as  
it formed from the  
ether, the Liches struck  
in tandem. As darkness  
enveloped me, I saw Lan  
rush forward and plunge  
his sword to the hilt into  
the central Lich, while my  
summoned blade spirit  
dispatched the one to the  
right, and Isabella and  
Racelin finished the third.  
I do not know how long I  
waited in limbo, but from  
my ghostly perspective I  
saw the entire battle.  
Racelin fell to the sword  
of a skeletal knight, and  
was quickly revived by  
Talis. As the battle  
neared the end, Talis  
walked over to where  
My body lay and said,  
"Rise, young seafarer, our  
time to fight is now!"

A nimbus of blue-white  
light surrounded me, and I  
found myself back  
amongst the living. I  
quickly gathered my  
belongings and returned to  
battle.

I knelt over the corpse  
of one of the zombies  
who had appeared to be a  
sailor while he yet lived,  
and quickly recited the  
Sailor's Lament. Among his  
belongings was a Tricorne  
Hat, and I noticed a faint  
glow emanating from it. I  
took the hat and what

little gold he had on him.

Four zombies shuffled towards me. I was low on the reagents I needed to cast magical spells, but I found I had just enough sulfurous ash to cast a field of fire between them and me. I quickly donned the hat I had just acquired, and cast. To my surprise, I still had sulfurous ash! The hat apparently was enchanted to occasionally replace the need for reagents.

"Time to go," Talis said, and summoned a portal leading us safely out of the dungeon.

"Well done, Magellan! I am glad you stayed with us 'til the end," Lan said.

"Aye," Talis agreed. "You are a fitting addition to iron will, young seafarer." With that he bowed. "By your leave, Lanavar, I must depart." He turned one last time to me, gave the briefest of salutes, and said, "Fare ye well, Admiral," and was gone.

We drank well that night, and laid out plans for the future...